What Were you before You were born?

It was one of those mornings, perhaps a Monday, when there were only a few people, the regular ones, and Shri Maharaj sat with his eyes closed and very, very still like a molten statue. He suddenly started speaking softly, so softly that we unconsciously moved nearer to him to catch his words. He continued to sit with his eyes closed. He was thinking aloud: People consider me a Dnyaani, they come from all over the world — from Canada to Australia and New Zealand, from England to Japan; they have read ~~the~~ "I AM That" and have come all the way to Bombay; ~~they have searched out~~ after several enquiries they locate this little "ashram" of mine in a dirty little street; they walk up ~~this~~ the steps into this loft, and find a little man ~~sitt~~ ~~with~~ in the simplest of clothing, sitting in a corner. They think: he doesn't look like a Dnyaani, he doesn't dress impressively, but we must presume that he is ~~what is~~ the one known as Nisargadutta Maharaj.

What can I say to these people? ~~Who~~ I tell them, quite frankly ~~I the~~ that my education is barely up to the level which can put~~s~~ me into the category of the literate; I have not read any of the great traditional texts, because the only language I know is Marathi. The only enquiry I have pursued — ~~and~~ but, of course, pursued it like a hunter ~~does~~ pursues his ~~quarry~~ quarry — is this: I know I am; I have a body — how did this happen without my knowledge or consent? What is this knowledge I AM?? This is the only enquiry ~~of~~ I have pursued and I am fully satisfied with the answers I have reached. This is my only Dnyaana, and people consider me a Dnyaani. My Guru told me: You are Brahma, You are everything — there is nothing other than you. And I accepted my Guru's word as TRUTH. And now, for forty odd years I have been sitting in this very room, doing nothing, and people from far and near come to see me. What a miracle!

After pursuing my enquiry to its very depths, what conclusion have I arrived at? The whole thing is really simple if only one sees the true picture clearly. What is this "Me" one that I am concerned with? The answer, of course, is "this me, this body", but then it is only the psychosomatic apparatus. What is the most important element in this apparatus which is generally known as a sentient being? It is undoubtedly the consciousness, without which the apparatus, while technically alive, would be useless as far as any functioning is concerned. But then this consciousness obviously needs the physical construct in which to manifest itself. So the consciousness depends upon the body. And what is the body made of? How does the body come into existence. The body is a growth in the womb during the nine month period, the growth of what is conceived by the union of the male and female ~~the~~ sexual fluids; these fluids are the essence of ~~what~~ the food consumed by the parents. Basically, therefore, the consciousness and the body are both ~~the~~ made of and fed by food. ~~When the as~~ Indeed, the body itself is food - one body being the food of some other creature. When the food essence - the vital sexual fluids - grow from conception into a tiny body and is delivered out of the mother's womb, it is called 'birth', and when this essence gets too old - or the psychosomatic apparatus, including consciousness, is, for some reason, destroyed - ~~and~~ it is called 'death'. This is what happens all the time; the objective universe, projecting and dissolving innumerable forms. The picture changes all the time - but how am I concerned with this? I am merely the witness of all this happening. Whatever happens during the period of the happening, in each case, happens only to the psychosomatic apparatus, not to the I I am.

This is the extent of my knowledge; - basically. Once this is clear - that whatever happens in the manifested world is something apart from me - the I - the other questions almost solve themselves.

Exactly at what stage did I come to have the knowledge of my existence? What was I before this knowledge I AM came to me? This knowledge I AM has been with me ever since I can remember, perhaps a few months after this body was born. Therefore, memory itself must have come with this knowledge I AM – this consciousness. What was the position before then? The answer is: I ~~do~~ do not know. Therefore, whatever I know has its beginning in consciousness, including pain and pleasure, day and night, waking and sleeping – indeed the entire gamut of dualities and opposites, in which one cannot exist without the other. Again, what ~~is~~ was the position before the consciousness arose? These opposites inevitably reunited in unicity, in wholeness – that is the answer: THIS UNICITY IS WHAT I AM. But this unicity, this identity, this wholeness cannot see itself because there is no subject which can see another object.

The mind cannot be used to transcend mind; the Eye cannot see itself. 'Phenomena' cannot be phenomena without 'noumenon', ~~the known the~~: the limit of possible conceptualisation – the abstract of mind – is ~~the~~ Noumenon, the infinity of the unknown. Noumenon, the subject objectifies itself and perceives the universe, manifesting phenomenally within itself, but APPARENTLY outside in order to be ~~an~~ a ~~object~~ perceivable object. For the noumenon to manifest itself objectively as the phenomenal universe, the concept of space-time comes into operation because objects, in order to be cognisable have to be extended in space-time.

So now I have the whole picture: the sentient being is only a small part in the process of the apparent exteriorisation of the Noumenon into the phenomenal universe. The sentient being, in other words is only one object in the total objectivisation and, as such, can not have no nature of ~~to~~ one own. And yet – and this is important – phenomena are not something created or even projected but are indeed noumenon rendered objective. In other words, the difference is purely conceptual: without the concept they are eternally inseparable, and there is no real duality. ~~In~~

This identity – this inseparableness –

is the key to the understanding, or rather the apperceiving of our true nature. If this basic unity between the noumenon and the phenomenon is lost sight of, ~~one~~ we would get bogged down in the quagmire of ~~concepts~~ objectivisation, and concepts.

* When I remember what I was before I was 'born', I know that this knowledge I AM was not there, and, therefore, ~~I~~ in the absence of consciousness, there is no conceptualising; and whatever seeing takes place is not what one actually sees as a subject/object but seeing from within, from the source of all seeing. And when, through the great awakening, I realise the I AM the all-enveloping wholeness of holiness, whatever happens seems not to have even a touch of imperfection whilst I relatively live through the allotted span of life.

of an entity "needing" "liberation" will be seen as nonsense and the "liberation", if any, will be seen as liberation from the concept of liberation.

* Once it is understood that the Noumenon is all that we ARE and that the phenomena are what we APPEAR to be as separate objects, it will also be understood that no entity can be involved in what we ARE, and therefore, the concept of an entity "needing" "liberation" will be seen as nonsense and ~~the~~ "liberation", if any, will be seen as liberation from the concept of liberation.

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